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# JOUR 302: Reporting II—A Peer Review of Teaching Project Inquiry Portfolio

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Peer Review of Teaching Inquiry Portfolio

**Course: JOUR 302 – Advanced Reporting**

Spring 2014

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## **Introduction**

This document summarizes the results of a brief inquiry conducted as part of an advanced reporting course. The questions at hand were, “can students be taught to avoid bias in their journalistic work and to provide fair accounts of news developments?” and “how might they best be taught that?” This exploration revolved around a single lecture and discussion session, several reading assignments and the viewing of a video interview, and involved two writing assignments. The results suggest that both the teaching and evaluation of bias and fairness are difficult and complex. The findings suggest a single lesson may not be adequate and, further, that impartiality is a challenging concept and an approach that may take repeated critiquing of student work and instruction.

## **PART I: Background to the Issue Being Investigated**

### **Course Description**

The course, JOUR 302, is a one-semester advanced reporting class known as Reporting II. It is required of all journalism majors at UNL’s College of Journalism and Mass Communications and typically attracts juniors and seniors, with the occasional sophomore. All such students must have successfully passed JOUR 202, the introductory reporting class also known as Reporting I, and JOUR 201, an editing class, as well as a visual literacy class. Students needed to earn grades of “C” or higher in these prerequisite classes in order to enroll in JOUR 302.

Building on the approach taken in JOUR 202, students refine their skills in reporting and writing in the style of newspapers. They read well-regarded reporting from newspapers and report and write news and feature stories. They report and write on various topics, but the core of the course requires them to develop a “beat.” In such a beat approach, students adopt a single area of interest – such as public safety, municipal government, courts – and follow that beat through the semester. The idea is to encourage them to develop substantial knowledge and sources in those interest areas that allow them to report intelligently, thoroughly, fairly and impartially. The beat concept is derived from newspapers, which typically organize their coverage of news in such a system, assigning reporters to various beats. Similarly, the ideal of impartiality is derived from a newspaper approach, as contrasts with the viewpoint-oriented approaches often taken by magazines.

## Course History & Development

JOUR 302 has long been a mainstay course for journalism majors in our college. It has gone through several iterations in recent years, as the college has sought to respond to the growth of multimedia news coverage. For a time several years ago, the college split the course in half, with half the semester devoted to writing and half to video production. More recently, however, the faculty has shifted back to making the course a full semester reporting and writing class. The belief has been that students were not getting adequate instruction in either video or writing in such a combined approach; now, students must take an advanced video class in addition to JOUR 302. There has been some innovation, however, with data-based reporting – the use of computerized databases – taking a prominent role in the course now. Writing, in newspaper-style prose, remains the central vehicle for students to deliver their work, however.

Because it requires substantial work outside class, including the development of sources, interviewing, researching and writing, the course is challenging for many students. It typically has a high rate of withdrawals and modest grades. In the spring 2014 semester, for instance, one section of this class which I taught began with 15 students and ended with 10. Of those 10 who finished, one earned a “C minus,” which suggested she would have to take the course a second time if she remained a journalism major. Grades for the others included four “B pluses” one “B,” “two B minuses,” one “C plus” and one “C.”

Evaluations by the students who finished the class suggested they appreciated the rigor. Asked about aspect of the class they liked most, for instance, students answered “Prof. Weber’s enthusiasm|how high the bar was set made it a challenging/rewarding course,” “improving my writing,” “how the stories became progressively more complicated,” and “I liked that you offered a lot of constructive criticism.”

## Course Goals

The aims of the course are as follows. Students will:

1. Develop reporting skills
  - Gather and assess information through research and interviews.
  - Work a beat to see how reporters work and get a sense of the expertise a reporter needs.
  - Choose, research and develop a beat, much as a professional reporter would.
  - Learn how to find and use databases to develop story ideas and relevant facts.
  - Learn to report and write thoroughly and fairly, providing appropriate balance in stories that involve conflicts or differing views.

## 2. Refine organizational skills

- Develop the ability to manage time well, including meeting strict deadlines.
- Learn to handle several reporting and writing assignments simultaneously.
- Learn to plan well in advance of deadlines.
- Learn to pitch story ideas, doing sufficient advance work to persuade an editor that more research and writing is warranted.

## 3. Refine writing skills

- Develop the ability to write well in newspaper style, including mastering the openings of stories (“ledes”), the theme section (“the nut” paragraph), the use of quotes and anecdotes, and the use of short paragraphs.
- Develop the ability to identify the most important element of a news event or topic and to build a story, from the top down, based on that.
- Develop succinctness in writing.

The thought processes behind these goals are as follows.

- Students need to master these skills if they are to succeed in journalism, whether they pursue print, web or broadcast forms of the field. These are essential to the delivery of news and feature work.
- Further, if students eschew journalism, they will find the skills they learn in this course valuable in nearly any professional pursuit. Such skills are helpful to lawyers, doctors, business people, teachers, or anyone who needs to find, organize and present information.

## Issue Under Investigation

The issue to be studied is contentious in journalism circles nowadays. The development of the Internet, with the flourishing of viewpoint-based websites and the fragmenting of news outlets, and the growth of viewpoint-oriented television news programming are threatening the “objective” approach most mainstream American journalism organizations have taken since at least the middle of the Twentieth Century. In many news venues, the ideals of fairness and even-handedness are giving way to position-oriented approaches where the viewpoint of the journalist or his or her news organization becomes paramount in the selection and approach to reporting and news presentation.

Some journalism professionals argue, in fact, that “objectivity” -- classically defined as disinterest and even-handedness -- is impossible. They hold that all observers have biases that inevitably shape the questions they pursue, their assessments of the answers they find, and the way they present the information they develop. Journalists, they hold, are not like cameras that unblinkingly record reality or stenographers that simply record what they hear, but rather they pick and choose what to see and hear, what to ask about, and how to prioritize that information. Their perceptions, moreover, are shaped by their own experiences and world-views, which may differ radically from those of other reporters. Thus,

the only fair approach, in the eyes of such critics of impartiality, is for journalists to admit their biases and viewpoints so readers can weigh them as they examine their journalistic work.

This viewpoint on journalism is at odds with the now-traditional view that the voice and attitude of the journalist should be muted or altogether absent. While such a journalist may order reality as he/she sees or hears it, his/her duty is to present reality in a balanced way that gives credence to all sources who have standing (i.e., an informed view) to comment on issues. The ideal is for a reader to have no sense from the written piece of what the reporter's feelings might be about a contentious or partisan issue but rather to be presented with a full picture of different attitudes held by informed people on such an issue. This does not eliminate personality or liveliness in writing, or even the sense of justice (or injustice) or surprise that animates much reporting. But it upholds the idea that the subjects of a story – the people involved – should be the ones whose voices are reflected, rather than the views of the reporter. The reporter stays in the background, letting the subjects speak, even as he/she may distill viewpoints and contrast them, while painting pictures with facts and observations that amplify the subjects' views. Nothing in this approach precludes a reporter from pointing out inconsistencies or factual contradictions as subjects may raise such problems. But it does demand fairness.

If a journalism teacher adopts the impartiality approach and fosters that in his/her students, the challenge is twofold: whether and how to explain the debate between advocates of impartiality and those pressing for more viewpoint-oriented work, and second, how to inculcate the sense of impartiality in the student journalists. How can a teacher structure lessons and critiques to make it clear to students when a writer's views are creeping into his/her work? How can the teacher help the student to recognize that such views are present in published work and to eliminate them in their own work? Further, how can the student be taught to ask probing questions, animated perhaps by a sense of ferreting out wrongdoing, hypocrisy or inconsistency, but to be fair in both research and presentation?

## **PART II: Methodology**

### **Inquiry Scope**

When students begin their journalism work, they often are prone to include opinion statements in their texts. They offer their views of whether something is right or wrong, good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. Their work is shaped their own value judgments, which they sometimes freely share in the texts of their written work.

For journalists who hold to the impartiality model, however, such judgments are best left to people quoted in the accounts. They are not the province of the reporter who is, after all, merely delivering the news, not opining on it. It's fine to quote a politician saying his opponent is all wet on an issue, for instance, but it's not appropriate for a journalist to say that in a news story or feature (though such views would be suitable in an editorial or opinion column). The governing view in impartial journalism is

that the journalist is delivering the news, not offering his/her stance on it, and this tends to conflict with the inclination some students have to sermonize on the news.

For teachers who espouse impartiality, overt opinion statements may be relatively easy to detect and excise. A teacher simply needs to point them out and say it's fine for the reporter to find and quote someone who holds a particular view on events, but counsel that it's not the reporter's role to share his/her own view. Let the sources opine but, as a reporter, stick to the facts.

But opinion and the lack of impartiality can be more subtle. Writers can organize and cast information in such a way as to lead a reader to a particular conclusion. By the choices of adjectives and descriptions, a writer can tilt a reader one way or another on an issue, a person or an event. Unflattering terminology, for instance, can paint an ugly picture of a place, person or event, even if it is not inaccurate. Lack of balance in presenting contrasting views on certain issues, too, can lead readers to conclusions that the reporter may prefer. This is especially risky in controversial matters that may stoke powerful emotions in readers (and writers).

On another level, reporters may intentionally or unintentionally limit the information they develop in reporting. The questions they ask can be skewed, leading perhaps to answers that could be incomplete. Adherents of impartiality would not shrink from asking difficult questions, but would also be sure to ask questions that allow sources to fully air their views. The aim is completeness and balance in inquiry and in results.

Embracing fairness is not the same as embracing the false equivalence. Reporters are not bound to give equal space or time to views that are objectively false or flawed. For instance, one need not quote a member of the Flat Earth Society in stories about spacecraft orbiting the globe. When acknowledged facts are misreported or distorted by a subject in a news story, moreover, a reporter should point out the truth.

Further, it is true that different reporters are apt to see and portray events, people and issues in different manners. This may shape their reporting and writing alike. No two people are apt to see things precisely the same way, much less to describe them in precisely the same terms.

For all these reasons, some journalists hold that true "objectivity" is impossible even if one sought it as an ideal approach. That, however, is not my approach or that of most traditional journalism teachers. We hold that subjectivity is unavoidable, but that does not lead one to abandon the objectivity ideal. A reasonable middle ground exists in which journalists work to be fair, thorough and appropriately balanced in their reporting and in their presentation of material alike. It is my belief, based on long experience in the field, that this attempt at fairness is more easily attainable than objectivity.

The challenge, of course, is to develop the best methods for teaching fairness. How does one imbue students with an ability to ask penetrating questions designed to elicit useful information, but to not degenerate into argument with sources? Further, how does one teach such students to then share the information in an evenhanded and neutral way with readers?



## Specific Research Question

These questions involve many philosophical, socioeconomic and even psychological aspects. Reasonable people may differ on whether fairness is even truly possible, much less objectivity. Further, there are subjects on which noxious views don't deserve airing, much less equal space or time – one should not give a Holocaust-denier credibility by quoting him about a Holocaust remembrance event, for instance, and a racist's bigotry rarely deserves attention unless it is relevant to a story about racism or an event in which racism is a driving force and explanation is called for. Moreover, a sense of injustice or exposing wrongdoing, hypocrisy or stupidity often drives journalism, as it should (while this is inherently subjective and involves value judgments, an impartial reporter can find subjects who can comment on such faults, leaving himself or herself out of the reported piece). A journalistic crusade against wrongdoing is fine, although the journalist need not offer his/her opinions even while detailing the issues at stake.

Nonetheless, the central question here is:

**“Can journalism students be taught to avoid bias and to build fairness into their work?”**

## Methods of Inquiry

My approach to answering this question was to require the students to read certain materials and then for me to discuss those readings and the topic generally in a lecture and to screen a relevant video in class, followed by further discussion. Before these lessons, I asked students to study a sets of facts and quotes – including some fictitious material -- about a controversial topic and to write a news story based on that data. Then, to test whether students had absorbed the message, I gave them a second set of facts and quotes and asked them to write a second story. My hypothesis was that if they took the message in the readings and lecture to heart, they would show less bias and more fairness in their second stories. To assure an impartial evaluation, I asked two colleagues to review their stories and assess them for fairness and bias without knowing which story was the first and which was second and without identifying the authors.

The pedagogical elements of this approach included the following:

- Students read a piece called, “Is Glenn Greenwald the Future of News?” by former New York Times columnist and the paper’s former executive editor. This piece included exchanges between Keller, an advocate of impartial journalism, and Glenn Greenwald, a key player in the leaking of documents by former CIA contractor Edward Snowden and an advocate of what Keller calls a “more activist, more partisan kind of journalism.” The October 2013 exchange reveals

two very different approaches – Keller’s advocacy of “aggressive but impartial reporting” countered by Greenwald’s view that every journalistic choice is “highly subjective” and all journalism is “a form of activism.”

- They read a *BusinessWeek* feature story about a small town in Texas, Waxahachie, in which the writer takes a condescending tone toward residents’ beliefs in creationism and their political and social views in the context of the expected arrival of physicists who would build and operate a giant “superconducting super collider,” a particle accelerator designed to answer such questions as how the universe came to be.
- In class, they viewed a video of a July 2013 interview on Fox News with author Reza Aslan, a religion scholar who wrote *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. The interview was widely derided as unfair as the questioner repeatedly hammered away on the theme of why a Muslim would write about Christianity rather than exploring the themes and topics the writer developed in his book. The author repeatedly answered that he was a scholar who, like many others, had made an academic career in studying different religions and whose personal religious views were irrelevant and beside the point of the book.
- A lecture and discussion of how impartiality is generally the preferred approach for journalists writing for newspapers. The lecture addressed the issue of how one must recognize and harness one’s own biases, making use of them in reporting and research, when relevant (a sense of indignation at injustice, for instance can be helpful). But the lecture also discussed how one must discard such biases in writing the news. Further, the lecture dealt with fairness, urging that the students comb their work to make sure they are fair to all parties involved in a news story. The discussion included references to the readings and students were encouraged to share their views and reactions to the material and the lecture.

These lessons were bracketed by the two writing assignments to test whether there had been progress among the students in recognizing and excising bias and in delivering the news fairly.

- In the first assignment, students were given a set of facts and quotes – some fictitious – involving the consequences of and reactions to the legalization of marijuana in Colorado. The news development there included plans by a conservative legislator to set a standard for blood tests to determine whether pot users could be judged guilty of driving under the influence of marijuana, as well as comments by marijuana critics and rebuttals by defenders.
- In the second, the facts and quotes – again including fictitious elements – dealt with abortion. The developments include a \$2 million settlement to be paid to the family of a woman who died in a botched abortion. The comments included criticisms by anti-abortion activists and comments by defenders of abortion.

## Data Collection

These assignments were part of the normal course of study in the class. The reading assignments were part of a lesson specifically aimed at alerting students to bias and to sensitizing them to issues of

fairness. Similarly, the writing assignments were routine elements and students were graded on them as they would be on other writing assignments. Thus, there was no need for specific IRB approval or consents and the approval granted for the peer review of teaching overall would cover the work. Students had been alerted in the syllabus, nonetheless, that their work would be part of a study that may be published.

The data came from two sections of the course. I taught one section and a colleague taught the second. Throughout the semester, we brought the sections together for several joint lessons, and we brought them together on Feb. 19, 2014, for the lecture and discussion session on fairness and bias.

We collected and graded the 36 resulting papers, as we normally would. If explicit opinion statements appeared in the texts, we pointed them out, but the grading dealt with all the normal issues of student news accounts. We assessed them on completeness, journalistic writing style, proper uses of quotes and anecdotes, etc.

For purposes of the inquiry, however, I turned the papers over to two colleagues, visiting instructor John Baker and Associate Professor Bernard McCoy, to evaluate them for fairness and bias. To assure that this was a blinded approach, I removed student names from the work and did not include grades. I also did not indicate which assignment preceded the lecture and which followed.

I created two scales for the reviewers to use in evaluating the work, one for bias and one for fairness. I asked them to rate each story on scales of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating low ratings on both bias and fairness (thus, the best rating would be 5 on the fairness scale and 1 on the bias scale). I created separate scales because it is possible (though undesirable) for a writer to show bias in a story, but still offer a fair account with all appropriate viewpoints represented.

## Assumptions and Anticipated Difficulties

- The key assumptions made in this project were:
- That bias can be recognized and curbed
- That fairness can be fostered
- That both can be recognized and measured by professional journalism educators
- That a targeted lesson can lead to measurable improvement in avoidance of bias and development of fairness in the students' work\

The main difficulty that I anticipated in this study was accounting for subjectivity on the part of my readers. Bias and fairness can differ in the eyes of each beholder. So I intended to counter that by averaging their responses to each story.

## PART III: Analysis and Assessment of the findings

### Key Findings Were Surprising

I expected to see measurable improvement in fairness and the avoidance of bias between the first story, which dealt with marijuana, and the second, which dealt with abortion. As it turned out, however, there was no discernible improvement and, indeed, bias appeared to worsen.

Below, in [Figure 1](#), are the average and median results. Story one, with assessments in blue, came before the lecture and discussion (pre-intervention), and story two, with assessments in red, came after (post-intervention).

Reader Assessments (Figure 1)



Figure 1

### Statistical Analysis

The results suggest that the average degree of fairness rose slightly, but that the average degree of bias also rose slightly. Further, the median amount of fairness declined and the median degree of bias rose. If

one looks at the numerical results and renders them in percentage terms, we see that the average degree of fairness rose from 2.78 to 2.86, or 2.9 percent, while the average degree of bias rose from 2.92 to 3.28, or 12.3 percent. With the medians, the difference appeared more dramatic: fairness declined 16.7 percent, from 3 to 2.5, while bias rose by 33.3 percent, moving from 3 to 4.

Even if one allows for overstatement in the medians, the results suggest a decline in perceived bias and at a minimum no appreciable improvement in fairness.

## Differences Between Reviewers

When one breaks down the averages between the reviewers, variances between them emerge. One sees differences between them on each story, and in general one sees differences in their perceptions of bias and fairness. In the marijuana story, the first story, reviewer No. 1 saw substantially more bias, on average, and modestly less fairness, on average than review No. 2. In the second story, about abortion, reviewer No. 1 similarly saw substantially more bias than did reviewer No. 2. See tables below in figures 2 and 3:

### Story No. 1-Reader Assessment (Figure 2)

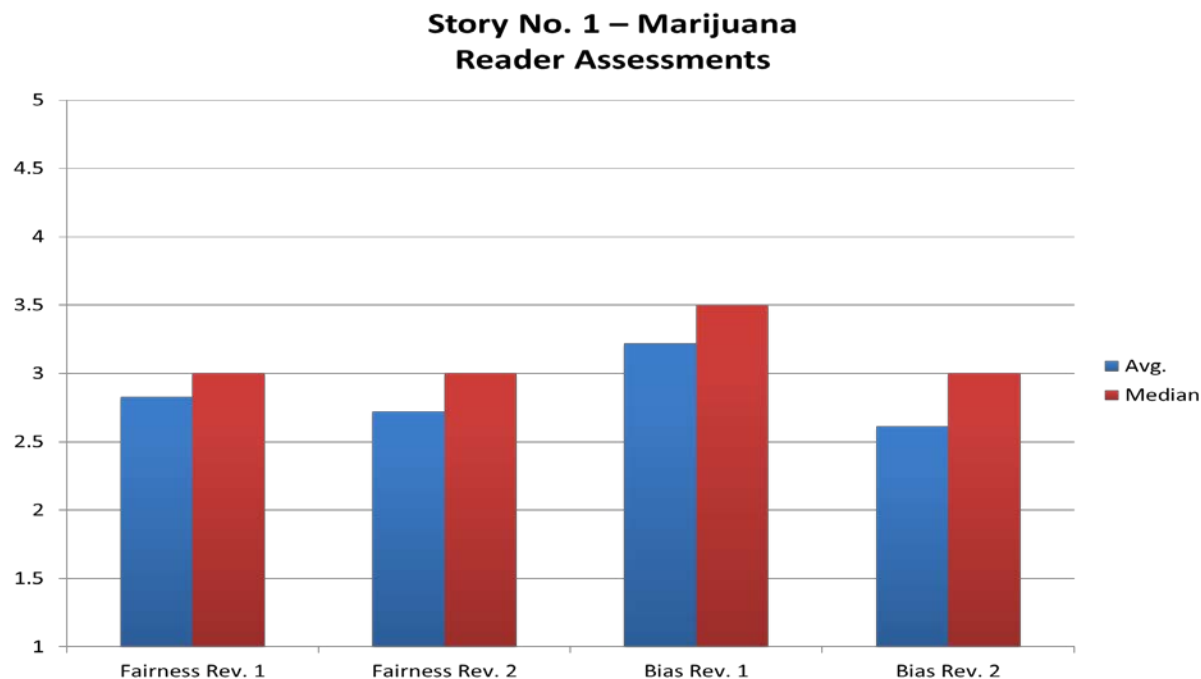


Figure 2

### Story No. 2-Reader Assessment (Figure 3)

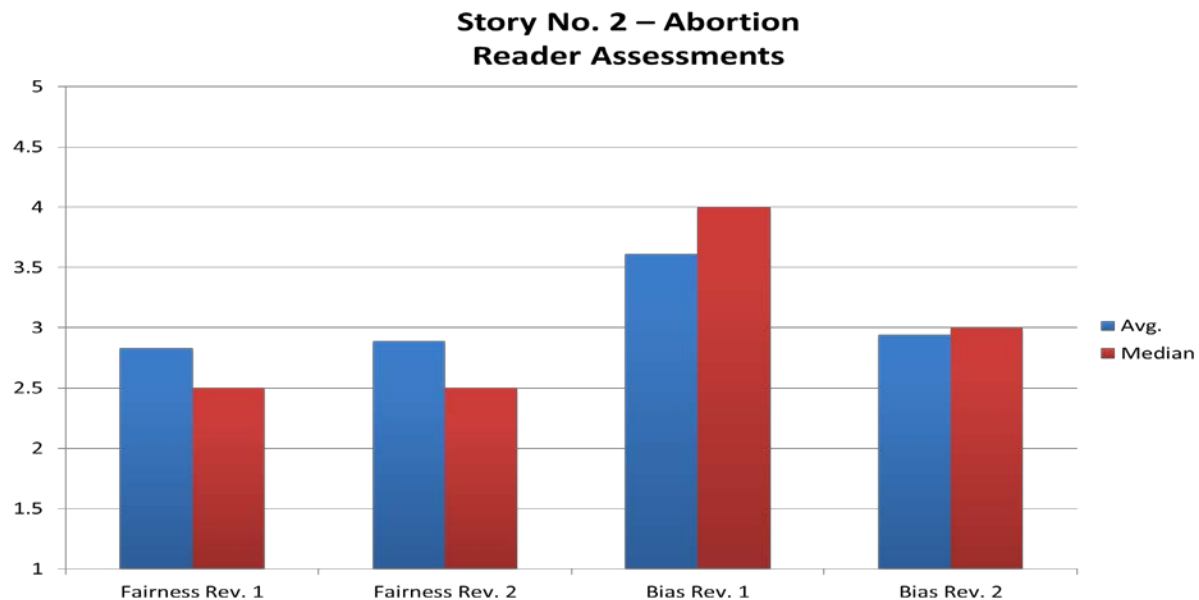


Figure 3

## Findings and Conclusions

An unexpected or even disappointing result can be just as illuminating as an expected one, or even more so. In this case, I expected to find substantial improvement in the avoidance of bias and in fairness after a lecture about the topics. The results at best were equivocal, with no substantial improvement in fairness and an increase in perceived bias. But one can draw a number of conclusions from this that can be helpful in teaching:

Writing interesting copy in a disinterested manner is a learned skill that takes time, practice, and a teacher's oversight over time to develop. It may be that journalism students need repeated critiques over a full semester or longer to develop a journalist's mindset and approach to news stories. A single lesson – even when it includes a pair of reading assignments, a video and a lecture/discussion session -- may simply be inadequate, even when one is dealing with students in an advanced class. Sensitizing students to issues of bias and fairness may simply take more effort.

It may also be that it is impossible to expunge bias, that nontraditional journalists such as Greenwald are correct. Bias may be inescapable and efforts to limit it may be doomed, so the best course may be for journalists to be upfront about their attitudes. After 35 years in the field and close familiarity with both viewpoint-oriented magazine journalism and newspaper approaches, I don't adhere to this. But I do appreciate the argument.

It may also be that the choice of topics for the stories left us with poor examples. Abortion may be a more inflammatory issue than marijuana. Furthermore, the facts of the abortion story were especially difficult (involving a woman's death), and thus may give rise to an emotional treatment that could be seen as biased. If the order of the stories had been reversed, the conclusions may well have been different (though one can't know that from the inquiry here).

Perception of bias and fairness may be so subjective that measurements inevitably will be flawed. There was measurable difference between the reviewers on the issue. So enlisting more reviewers would yield a more reliable set of measures.

## Proposed Changes

Based on the current inquiry, it is apparent to me that the issue of dealing with bias and fairness is important. Indeed, it is a central matter for journalists whose job traditionally has been to deliver the news in an evenhanded and straightforward manner. Further, it is apparent that students do need instruction in how to achieve that approach, in how to develop habits of mind in which they may be guided by personal judgment but not impaired by it and in which they learn to listen to and reflect varying viewpoints in their work.

I believe that this inquiry makes it clear that the task is not a simple one. Instilling an unbiased and fair-minded approach in students takes time, effort and substantial criticism when warranted. The task may take far more than a few weeks and a single dedicated lesson; indeed, a semester may be inadequate. But administering the test stories at the beginning of a semester and at the end, after much work by the students and many critiques by a teacher, could show more progress.

The choice of topics for the test stories, too, may be crucial. Perhaps the fairest approach would be to give the students the same set of facts and quotes at the outset of the semester as at the end. They likely would have forgotten how they organized their work initially and so would approach it afresh. And using the same material would eliminate the question of whether the topics or facts of the stories skewed the results.

Giving the readers more specific direction on how to evaluate fairness and objectivity might also be helpful. This could include a rubric under which deductions would be listed for such elements as opinion statements, inadequate balance of quotes and non-neutral tone.

## Final Comments

I believe this exercise would be worth repeating, with the appropriate changes. Whether this could be applied in a study or not, it would make for a useful exercise and lesson for the students. The topic is too important in journalism to be ignored.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Fact Sheets from Which Students Wrote Their Stories

#### Fact Sheet 1

Colorado legalized marijuana but is now dealing with the challenges of regulating and limiting it. Critics, moreover, are still arguing against the trend. Even vice president Joe Biden has come out against legalization, at least on the federal level.

So here are some facts and comments (some are made-up, but for purposes of this story, treat them as if they are real).

Write a two-page story based on this information:

Prosecutors and some lawmakers are pushing for laws to set a strict-blood level limit for THC, the key ingredient in cannabis. A driver over the limit would be deemed guilty of driving under the influence, just as with alcohol.

One Colorado lawmaker, State Sen. Sidney J. Carmen of Colorado Springs, on Feb. 13 will introduce a bill in the Colorado State Legislature that would establish a limit of two nanograms per milliliter of blood, similar to a standard used for medical marijuana in Nevada and Ohio.

“We cannot have our highways littered with the corpses of stoners and their victims,” said Carmen at a press conference in Denver on Feb. 10. “Even though we sent a message to the state’s druggies that they can get high at will with legalization, now it’s time to deal with the ugly downsides of that mistaken policy. This bill will be a first step.”

Carmen, a minister in the Christ Comes First Evangelical Church in Colorado Springs, argued repeatedly last year that the legalization of marijuana would mark another step on the road to the End of Days. His church holds an apocalyptic view of theology, saying that such moves as legalization of gay marriage and drugs are markers of social decline that precedes the end of the world.

Former Rhode Island Rep. Patrick Kennedy, scion of the famed Democratic dynasty, appeared at the press conference with Carmen. He backed the bill and decried Colorado’s move to legalize pot.

“Marijuana destroys the brain and expedites psychosis,” he said. “It’s just overall a very dangerous drug.”

Kennedy long battled addiction to alcohol and prescription drugs. He admitted to using pot, as well. “In terms of neurobiology, there’s no distinction between the quality and types of drugs that people get addicted to,” he said. “That’s why they call it a gateway drug. Addiction is addiction is addiction.”



Officials of an activist group that has fought against legalization shared the dais with the two men. The officials of Citizens Against Legalizing Marijuana (CALM) were introduced by Carmen and briefly spoke against pot. The CALM members were Phyllis Messenger, a San Diego mother whose son, Dylan, died of a heroin overdose in early 2011, and Kathy Robinson, a 36-year-old Ohio woman who has been in and out of treatment for drug abuse and who has been “clean” for two years.

“Legalization of marijuana has come here and now we will see that it has come at the expense of our children and public safety,” said Messenger. “The genie may be out of the bottle, but we must control it before it turns into a demon for us all.”

Robinson said: “All those champions of liberty who pushed for legalized dope don’t realize that all you’ve done is freed people to destroy themselves. You will create a generation of new addicts and many of them will die.”

Carmen has said he will systematically attack the legal position of marijuana at every turn. He plans to introduce bills in the future that will permanently bar marijuana retailers from establishing banking relationships, meaning sales with credit cards will be prohibited, and retailers won’t be able to borrow money or maintain accounts for their receipts. He also plans to introduce legislation empowering school administrators to expel students who are found to be using marijuana on school grounds or within 300 feet of such grounds. He plans to introduce legislation that would lift the licenses ski areas operate under if they permitted marijuana use at resorts.

“We lost the first round of this battle,” Carmen said. “But the war will stretch on for years. And, as the casualties of marijuana use add up, we will eventually prevail.”

He pointed to comments by Vice President and potential 2016 Presidential candidate Joe Biden in a recent TIME Magazine interview about how the Obama Administration is not pushing marijuana legalization on the federal level.

Biden’s comments came just weeks after President Barack Obama told the New Yorker that the drug is no more dangerous than alcohol.

Biden said the administration supports smarter enforcement, but not outright legalization. “I think the idea of focusing significant resources on interdicting or convicting people for smoking marijuana is a waste of our resources,” Biden said. “That’s different than [legalization]. Our policy for our Administration is still not legalization, and that is [and] continues to be our policy.”

Biden, a usually outspoken lawmaker who came out in support of gay marriage before his boss, was reserved on the subject, TIME reported, apparently taking caution not to get out ahead of Obama. Biden’s position is essentially unchanged from a 2010 interview with ABC News in which he called marijuana a “gateway drug.”

In the New Yorker interview, Obama said “it’s important for” legalization to go forward in Colorado and Washington, because of racial and economic disparities in enforcement. Asked about Obama’s comments, Biden said, “Look, I support the President’s policy.” The President put the brakes on calls for

executive action to legalize marijuana in an interview with CNN last week, saying it was a decision for Congress, not the White House.

In the Senate, Biden was on the forefront of the Democratic Party's war on crime, authoring or co-sponsoring legislation that created the federal "drug czar" and mandatory minimum sentencing for marijuana and the sentencing disparity for crack and powder cocaine.

"I am not only the guy who did the crime bill and the drug czar, but I'm also the guy who spent years when I was chairman of the Judiciary Committee and chairman of [the Senate Foreign Relations Committee] trying to change drug policy relative to cocaine, for example, crack and powder," Biden said.

Advocates of legalization scoffed at Carmen's bill setting a THC level for driving, predicting that it will be dead on arrival in the legislature. They said his crusade is quixotic at best and some accused him of grandstanding, noting that the conservative Republican he plans to run for governor.

"The guy oughta take a toke now and then to clear his head," said Charlie Stabenow, head of the Boulder chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). "The citizens of Colorado spoke loudly on this issue and it is apparent to them that there's nothing wrong with grown-ups lighting up once in a while."

Stabenow, a long-haired disheveled 26-year-old who swayed slightly and smelled like he been smoking marijuana, stood at the edge of the crowd at Carmen's press conference. Occasionally, he laughed and muttered to himself, but it wasn't clear whether he was reacting to comments in the session.

NORML opposes any effort to set a limit on THC for driving, saying the effects of marijuana use vary from person to person. Thus, it says, a limit – especially the low limit Carmen is pushing for – would just be a license for police to harass marijuana users.

"The science and common sense doesn't support Carmen's foolish rule," Stabenow said.

The legislation setting a THC limit has failed several times in recent years in the face of fierce opposition from marijuana advocates and defense lawyers, who claim a one-size-fits-all standard doesn't work for marijuana because it affects the body differently than alcohol.

A recent hearing on regulation of marijuana drew both opponents and backers to Denver.

"I haven't had a car accident since I was 18, and I've had marijuana in my system for most of that time," said Paul Saurini, 39, one of numerous weed activists, or "wactivists," who spoke out against setting a firm blood-level limit during a public hearing in the state capital this week.

But police officials dispute that, calling for a scientifically supportable limit.

"We have to create some standards to protect public safety. Not doing so, in my opinion, is reckless public policy," said John Jackson, the police chief in Greenwood Village, Colo. "Any time you legalize things like this, you'll have more of it on the roadway. If we had vending machines with Oxycontin, there'd be more people on Oxycontin driving on the roadways. And that's not safe."

Since the passage of Amendment 64 in November, Colorado has been wrestling with the many questions of how to regulate the new marijuana reality, from how to tax it and monitor its growth to where people can buy it, sell it, smoke it and advertise it.

But drugged driving looms as one of the most critical and controversial issues. The outcome of Colorado's struggle to shape marijuana-related DUI laws could have far-reaching implications, as a growing number of states approve marijuana for medical use and others consider legalizing the drug altogether.

State Sen. Steve King, a Republican who supports a THC limit, insists that driving high is no different than driving drunk. "You're a threat and a hazard," he said. "The consensus should be to err on the side of safety for the traveling public."

Michael Elliott and other marijuana advocates argue that marijuana affects different people differently, and that setting a THC limit would free prosecutors from having to prove their cases and could lead to wrongful DUI convictions.

"When it comes to criminal law, we err on the side of protecting the freedom of our citizens and holding the criminal justice system to the highest standards of proof," said Elliott, a lawyer and executive director of the Colorado-based Medical Marijuana Industry Group.

Though research and opinions vary widely, studies have shown that smoking marijuana tends to affect spatial perceptions. Drivers might swerve or follow other cars too closely, as well as lose their concentration and suffer from slowed reaction times. Such findings have led some researchers to conclude that driving high doubles the chances for an accident, and that smoking pot and drinking before driving is a particularly dangerous mix.

Every state bars driving under the influence. But convictions in drugged-driving cases generally rely on police officers' observations rather than blood tests. The White House in a drug policy paper last year called on states to adopt blood-limit laws in an effort to reduce drugged-driving incidents by 10 percent by 2015.

But different states have taken different approaches.

In Ohio and Nevada, where medical marijuana is legal, the limit for driving is two nanograms per milliliter of blood. In Washington state, that limit is five nanograms. A dozen other states, including Illinois, Iowa and Arizona, have zero-tolerance policies for driving under the influence of marijuana and various controlled substances.

In Colorado, both sides agree that people shouldn't drive impaired; the fight is over what should be used as proof of impairment.

Marijuana advocates argue that, unlike with alcohol, traces of the drug remain in the bloodstream long after an individual has smoked pot, and that a THC test can mistakenly suggest a person is high, especially in a regular smoker who has built up tolerance to the drug. But officials who favor a blood-

level limit say tests exist that can pinpoint “active” THC in the bloodstream in the hours immediately after marijuana usage.

People on both sides cite the work of Dutch researcher Jan Ramaekers, who found that marijuana users generally are impaired at a level of five nanograms, but that many cannabis users do develop higher tolerances.

Ramaekers, in an interview, said he supports the five-nanogram limit, noting that lawmakers have long set a legal limit for alcohol in the name of public safety, even though people have different tolerances and impairment varies by person.

“Who should the law serve: the individual or the population?” he asked.

Still, some in Colorado are concerned about drawing a bright line between impaired and unimpaired when it comes to marijuana. The state Senate’s majority leader, Democrat Morgan Carroll, said research suggests that impairment can occur with anywhere from two to 20 nanograms per milliliter of blood. “My number one problem is that you could convict someone at five nanograms who wasn’t actually impaired,” she said.

Lawmakers are working on a compromise to break the long-standing impasse. One bill backed by some legislators would set five nanograms as the legal limit, but a test indicating that level would not automatically result in a DUI conviction. Instead, people accused of driving under the influence would be able to argue in court that they weren’t impaired. The measure is working its way through the statehouse and appears likely to pass.

Carroll is still not fond of the five-nanogram limit but says she and others might be swayed by the provision that would allow defendants to make their case in court. “It gives the accused the opportunity to come in and offer proof,” she said.

At a recent hearing about regulation, a string of law enforcement officials and a state toxicologist testified in favor of some restrictive legislation.

Ed Wood, a Colorado man whose son was killed in a car accident caused by a drugged driver, said he supported the bill but wants an even tougher standard. “We believe Colorado deserves better,” he said

## **Fact Sheet 2**

On Feb. 7, Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation agreed to pay the family of Tonya Reaves \$2 million after she died from hemorrhaging from a botched abortion in 2012. Reaves received the abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic on 18 S. Michigan Ave in Chicago, Ill.

“Planned Parenthood is a billion-dollar-a-year baby-killing business,” said Day Gardner, president of the National Black Pro-Life Union. “The money awarded to Tonya’s son is a pittance in comparison to what they are worth – \$2 million dollars is just a tiny drop in a bottomless bucket. The truly sad thing is that no one can put a dollar value on the life a human being - a life snuffed out way too soon.”

Reaves, a healthy 24-year-old black woman, was 16 weeks pregnant at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 20, 2012, the time of her abortion.

Her death, according to the autopsy report, was due to “hemorrhage resulting from cervical dilation and evacuation due to an intrauterine pregnancy.” It shows that she suffered a 3/16 inch perforation of the uterus from forceps (a tool used during the D&E abortion procedure to dismember the fetus). She also had “extensive” perforation of her broad uterine ligament.

After the botched abortion took place at Planned Parenthood, Reaves bled for five and a half hours without medical treatment.

A Freedom of Information Act request for the 911 calls from the Planned Parenthood location where Reaves received her abortion shows that the clinic never called 911 on Reaves’ behalf, even after five and a half hours had elapsed.

At 4:30 p.m., a Fire Department ambulance arrived and transported Reaves to Northwestern Memorial Hospital. After she arrived at the hospital it took several hours for her to receive proper treatment; “reports make it appear emergency personnel had to start from scratch to figure out the extent of Reaves’ injuries,” LifeNews, a pro-life media organization, reported.

Hospital reports obtained by Steve Miller of WBBM Chicago showed that after Reaves arrived at the hospital, she had another D&E procedure (a second abortion) but continued to experience problems and pain. She was then given an ultrasound. At that point, the hospital discovered her uterine perforation. At 10:12 p.m. she was taken into surgery and an “uncontrollable bleed was discovered,” hospital documents say.

Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation have agreed to pay Reaves’ son, Alvin Jones III, a \$2 million settlement in this case.

“Ms. Reaves’ tragic death demonstrates the dire need for increased inspection and regulation of Illinois abortion clinics,” said Peter Breen, vice president and senior counsel for the Thomas More Society, a Chicago public interest law firm that takes up antiabortion causes, champions traditional families and presses for religious liberty. “Abortion clinics in this state are not held to the same standards as other outpatient surgical facilities, despite the fact that the average clinic performs hundreds of invasive surgeries each year.”

Planned Parenthood's facilities are not subject to regulation as surgical centers. There are no regular inspections that occur for safety or clinical standards unless they are under investigation due to patient complaint, an attorney speaking on background explained.

Illinois State Rep. Tom Morrison (R-Palatinate) has proposed a bill to amend the Ambulatory Surgical Treatment Center statute, to close the loophole that allows the clinics to currently remain exempt.

"We were deeply saddened by Ms. Reaves' death," said a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman, Cynthia Green. "We believe we did everything humanly possible to help her, but her hemorrhaging but was tragic accident. Once our personnel realized what was happening, we rushed out to facilities better-equipped to handle her. Tragically, it was too late."

"We have served hundreds of women without problems," Green said. "But in any medical procedure, problems – even tragic ones – can occur."

The Michigan Avenue clinic in 2012 provided various services to 4,503 women, a FOIA request revealed, according to a spokesman for the National Pro-Life Coalition. The services ranged from routine gynecological care to contraception counseling and abortion. It's not clear how many abortions took place that year at the clinic.

"Abortion is not a medical procedure," said Sidney Greenstreet, a spokesman for the National Pro-Life Coalition's Chicago office. "This was a double-murder in my view. Two lives were cruelly ended. It's a sad example of how perverted our medical culture has become."

The coalition plans to picket the Planned Parenthood clinic, carrying signs that will bear Reaves' college graduation photograph. They routinely picket the clinic now with signs featuring photographs of aborted fetuses.

"We want people to see and understand the loss and to grasp the horror of what goes on in that horrific place," said Greenstreet. "The sad reality is that it's a butcher shop."

A spokesperson for Northwestern Memorial Hospital said hospital personnel similarly rushed to provide help once Reaves arrived. "Our staff did everything we could, but her loss of blood was too great," said spokeswoman Candace Smith.

Under the settlement terms, none of the parties who contributed to the award admitted fault. The Reaves family is also precluded from taking any legal action against Planned Parenthood, the hospital or the foundation.

## Appendix B – Samples of the Stories Students Wrote, As Critiqued By the Reviewers

DS17

Rate from 1-5, with 1 low and 5 high (circle one number in each category, pls). The measures on the two issues may be the same or differ, as you judge:

Fairness (balanced treatment of all sides)

1 2 3 4 5

Bias (reflects a tilt to any point of view)

1 2 3 4 5

Colorado lawmakers are trying to define the blurred lines of the amount marijuana is too much for drivers to handle. A bill that would set five nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood, or five billionths of a gram, as the legal limit is going through the statehouse and is likely to pass. ?

THC is a main ingredient in cannabis and one gram of marijuana equivalent to about two joints.

The bill proposes that drivers under the influence of marijuana wouldn't be automatically convicted of a DUI, but allows the accused to argue in court that they weren't impaired when driving. But if a driver were guilty of being over the limit, he or she would be assumed of driving under the influence. This is similar to how driving under the influence of alcohol works.

State Sen. Sidney J. Carmen of Colorado Springs disagrees with the five nanogram limit and will introduce a bill in the Colorado State Legislature that would set the limit at two nanograms. Nevada and Ohio, states where marijuana is legal, have a limit of two nanograms like Carmen's bill. Medical marijuana usage is taken into account when deciding the limits, such as in Ohio and Nevada. Washington state's limit is five nanograms. Don't think so.

AS18

Rate from 1-5, with 1 low and 5 high (circle one number in each category, pls). The measures on the two issues may be the same or differ, as you judge:

Fairness (balanced treatment of all sides)

1 2 **3** 4 5

Bias (reflects a tilt to any point of view)

1 **2** 3 4 5

Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation agreed to pay a settlement of \$2 million to the son of a woman who died of hemorrhaging following an unsuccessful abortion. Tonya Reaves, 24, was 16 weeks pregnant when she received an abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic on 18 S. Michigan Ave. in Chicago in July 2012.

The settlement stipulates the Reaves family cannot take legal action against Planned Parenthood, the hospital or its foundation. Also, none of the parties involved admitted any fault in the situation.

Reaves died of a "hemorrhage resulting from cervical dilation and evacuation due to an intrauterine pregnancy," according to the autopsy. She had a small perforation in her uterus from a tool used in abortion procedures, as well as "extensive" perforation of her broad uterine ligament.

"Ms. Reaves' tragic death demonstrates the dire need for increased inspection and regulation of Illinois abortion clinics," Peter Breen, vice president and senior counsel for the Thomas More Society, said. The Thomas More Society is a Chicago public interest law firm that takes up antiabortion causes, works for traditional families and presses for religious liberty.



## Appendix C –Notes for the lecture

So, let's talk about bias and opinions in journalism. Let's talk a bit about objectivity and the ideal of objectivity or impartiality, the word that Bill Keller uses in his exchange with Greenwald. And let's talk about fairness.

First, I'd like to hear your reactions to the Keller-Greenwald exchange. What did you think about their argument? Which of them, in your view, was right?

Keller extols what he calls impartial reporting and says reporters and editors should keep their opinions to themselves unless they are working for editorial pages. Greenwald says human beings are not objectivity-driven machines. We all see things subjectively and there's no point in pretending otherwise.

So who is right? And how should news organizations deal with the questions of subjectivity, bias and opinion in news reporting and writing?

Let me hear your opinions on this.

Okay, I will argue today for a viewpoint that my longtime editor at BusinessWeek held. This may not be Keller's view or Greenwald's view. But it's an attitude and an approach that I find helpful and you may as well.

My editor, Steve Shepard, argued that there is no such thing as objectivity. We as reporters are not free of judgments, of viewing things based on where we come from and the values we hold dear. And when we report and write, those judgments and values are bound to come in. We are not stenographers blindly taking down notes in a courtroom or cameras recording events in the frame clinically and without imposing any sense of priorities or viewpoint – although even a camera is not all that objective, one could argue, because it can't take in stuff that happens outside its frame of vision.

Our judgments and values influence the kinds of questions we ask, the kinds of stories we pursue or don't pursue, the lede and nut graf we create, the focus we take, the way we order and arrange material on the page in a story and on the page of the paper or the placement in the newscast. All of that is subjective.

Pardon this bit of sexism here, but let me share an old newspaper friend's view. There are three things that no man can do to the satisfaction of another man—poke a fire, make love to a woman and run a newspaper.

What does that mean? In part, that means that news organizations are different. They often run different stories, take different approaches to stories. The editors in those organizations ask their

reporters to produce different writing styles, to turn in different kinds of work. The voice of the New York Times – if there is one – is different from the voice of the Lincoln Journal Star. Both are different from the voice of the New York Post. And then, when you get into magazines, you get far more differing voices – the New Yorker has a different approach than the Atlantic. And magazines, in general, take a far more subjective and opinionated approach than most newspapers do.

And this is more than just a matter of style. Is there anyone who doesn't think Fox News has a different approach than CNN or that both have different approaches from MSNBC? Fox has a consciously and deliberately conservative approach in its news, it is catering to an audience that expects that. CNN has tried to take a more middle-of-the-road approach. MSNBC is heavily freighted with opinion from the left and is quite overt about it.

So, let me say that subjectivity, judgment and values can't be eliminated. We're stuck with them. In fact, I argue that they help you do your work. One of the things that drives investigative journalism is righteous indignation at some outrage or another. Reporters see or learn of something that is wrong, in their view, and they dig and dig to uncover the wrong and expose it. That is judgment, that is subjective. And that is often behind excellent journalism.

Do you think reporters who dug around in Bill Clinton's private life thought it was okay for a president to consort with a young intern in the White House? Do you think reporters who dug around in New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's dealings with hostile mayors – or the dealings of his staff with hostile mayors – think it's okay for a governor or his staff to cause traffic jams out of political pique? No, it's righteous indignation that drives the inquiries. The same is true in investigations of companies producing bad food or politicians who line their pockets at the public expense.

That sort of work is driven by passion and is driven by a desire to uncover things that the journalists think are wrong. That's a good thing. That's subjectivity and judgment put to good use.

But, whether it's investigative stuff or whether it's just ordinary daily reporting, we need to be careful that subjectivity and judgment don't get in the way of fairness. My old boss, Steve Shepard, argued that we can't be objective, but we must be fair.

We have an obligation to be fair, to give all reasonable sides of a story their due. We have to allow for the possibility that we're wrong or that other people we quote – whom we agree with -- are wrong. We have to be balanced.

We have to allow for the possibility that Gov. Christie, for instance, maybe didn't know about what his staff was doing in Fort Lee with those traffic jams. That's what the man says and we are obligated to make note of his denials. At the moment, we have no smoking gun that proves he knew what his staffers and friends were doing. He says he didn't know. Others say that's impossible or, at least, that if was doing his job, he should have known. We quote them both.

I don't think there's much of a defense for Bill Clinton's activities, even if one has a very narrow definition of sex as he seemed to have.

Anyway, my point is that we are in an odd position as journalists. We owe readers our good judgment and selectivity in choosing stuff to write about and the ways we write about things. We are more than just middlemen. But we also owe readers a full and fair accounting of things, as full and fair as we can make it. That's why I and Shepard would argue for fairness as the standard, not objectivity.

When you look over your copy or your broadcast, can you say it's fair? Have you given all reasonable sides their say? By the way, you'll note that I said "reasonable" sides – that doesn't mean we have what are called false equivalences. What is a false equivalence? It's where you are so even-handed that you cite an obviously wrong and ludicrous claim without pointing out that it's wrong.

The classic example there is the Flat Earth Society – this is a group, which I'm told still exists, that argues that the earth is actually not round. It also argues that moon landings were hoaxes. They might be worth an entertaining story, frankly, but they shouldn't be quoted in stories about moon exploration and given the same standing as reputable scientists or anybody who has half a brain. Republicans and Democrats should get equal billing in political stories, perhaps, but not Flat Earthers and real scientists in serious science stories.

But we do have an obligation to be fair and that goes for all media.

Let's look at couple examples and discuss whether they were fair –

## Is This The Most Embarrassing Interview Fox News Has Ever Done?

Reza Aslan, a religious scholar with a Ph.D. in the sociology of religions from the University of California and author of the new book *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, went on FoxNews.com's online show *Spirited Debate* to promote his book only to be prodded about why a Muslim would write a historical book about Jesus.

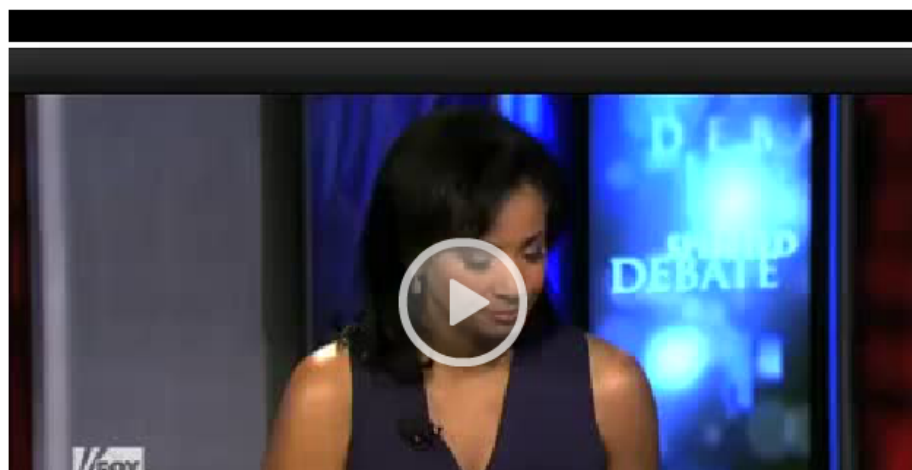
posted on July 27, 2013, at 8:30 p.m.



**Andrew Kaczynski**  
BuzzFeed Staff



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So, was the interviewer fair?

Let's look at an example of a piece in print, the one I asked you to read about Waxahachie, Texas.

So, how would you say the locals in Waxahachie come across in this piece? They look like a bunch of yahoos, don't they? I have no doubt that the writer of this piece, Kevin Kelly, got accurate quotes from real people. But are they representative of the town? If I find a group of religious snake-handlers in a town and go and quote them as representing the town, have I been fair to the town? The quotes may be accurate, religious snake-handlers are certainly to my way of thinking odd, but are they representative?

Now, having said that, I must make note here that there is a difference between magazines and newspapers. This is a feature piece in BusinessWeek – it's a light treatment that has a clear point of view, a view that looks down its nose at locals in Waxahachie. Readers of magazines expect a point of view and may not be troubled by this one. So, personally, I find this piece entertaining, but I'm not sure how fair it is. It reinforces my own view of Waxahachie, a town I briefly visited when I worked in Texas. My boss there lived in Waxahachie.

I don't believe you could get away with this kind of piece in the New York Times, perhaps not in the Wall Street Journal. But with a magazine you do have a bit more license. As a reader, though, you need to read carefully to see what kinds of bias you are getting. Kevin Kelly was a Californian who had a Californian's view of a little town in Texas. To him it was backwoods, backwards place. That's the picture he painted. Just be aware of what you are getting as a reader. And be mindful, as a reporter and writer, of the picture you are painting.

So, let's end with some tips for fairness and test of fairness in your work:

Have you represented all reasonable views of an issue?

Have you quoted people accurately and in a way that doesn't make them appear stupid? When people wanted to make former president George Bush look like a buffoon, they just quoted him literally, saying things like someone "misunderestimated" him. People often don't speak clearly or correctly and if you quote people at length, you can make someone really dumb – the answer is short quotes or partial quotes or quotes with brackets around words that correct the speaker's grammar.

If you look through your work, highlighting comments, will you find that you quoted one side far more than the other in an argument? If it's not 50-50, do you have a good reason for that? Have you, nonetheless, represented various views evenhandedly?

On the other hand, have you called people out when they've said something that is demonstrably untrue?

Have you avoided editorial comments that are clearly opinionated? Saying something is good, bad, moral, immoral, loopy or sensible, etc., rather than letting someone else make such observations?

Any questions or comments?

Now, as you know we've asked you to do another factsheet assignment. You did one already and I believe you may have feedbacks on that.

As you do this second one, I would ask you to be especially mindful of the fairness issues we've discussed. Review your copy before you turn it in to see if you have been fair, if you have taken a balanced view and left your opinions out. I believe the second paper is due on Sunday night and I'd ask you to email that to me at [josephweber@unl.edu](mailto:josephweber@unl.edu).

Again, any questions or comments?

## Appendix D – Copy of the BusinessWeek Story that Demonstrated Condescension

### WRITING A BUSINESS WEEK STORY

**ANECDOTAL LEDE**

*it*

**SIGNIFICANCE**

**THEME**

**PROOF OF THEME**  
(Shows how "vastly different" one culture is. We know other culture, so clash is implicit. Explicit might have been better.)

**SKEPTICISM**  
(Why theme may be wrong)

Andrew Tennery's barbershop in Waxahachie, Tex., was abuzz with talk about the U.S. Energy Dept.'s superconducting super collider. "Since coming here, I think a lot of major universities will come too," says accountant Jeff McCreight. "We'll be a big city now," agrees Tennery, 74. The barber looks up, shears in midair, and inquires: "By the way, what does that thing do?"

"That thing" is a 53-mile nuclear accelerator that would ring this town of 18,000 just 35 miles south of Dallas. Using superconducting magnets to hurtle protons around the ring in opposite directions, scientists hope the resulting collisions will shed light on the origins of the universe. Farmer Martin Aday can't account for their curiosity. "Why don't they just read the bible?" he asks.

Clearly, if the SSC comes to Waxahachie, muons and quarks won't be the only things colliding. Two vastly different cultures will interact unpredictably.

**OLD-FASHIONED.** Waxahachie is not the kind of town that falls prey to every passing fad. Folks go to church on Sunday, eschew liquor, drive pickups, and dote on high school football. Even though school prayers were outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1962, they still start the day in the public schools. Prayers also precede football games, and this year the 3-7 Indians needed the help. In short, the town closely resembles the Waxahachie depicted in Horton Foote's *Places in the Heart*, a film set in the depression. Foote, a native son, says he "hated to see" the coming of the super collider: "Waxahachie was one of the last 19th century towns in America."

Even the politics are of a piece with the local Victorian architecture. On Nov. 8, John Gage became only the second Republican sheriff of Ellis County since Reconstruction. The Republicans are the political amateurs in West Texas, a corner of the world known as Yellow Dog because, locals say, the Democrats could run a mutt for office and win.

But cultural anthropologists may never get to observe eggheads in the land of Bubba. Congress may not agree to finance the project. Senator Phil Gramm (R.Tex.) thinks the key to raising the money is getting the Japanese to participate. But lawmakers from four of the six states passed over for the project complain that politics influenced the site selection process. And in their demand for an investigation, they voiced a veiled threat that they would fight funding for the \$4.6 billion project. The cynics among them even argued that the services of a well-oiled Texas congressional delegation were as attractive to the Energy Dept. as the readily tunneled limestone underlying Waxahachie.

**KNOCK DOWN SKEPTICISM**  
(Stronger would be nicer)

(background)

**RAMIFICATION OF THEME**

**MORE PROOF OF THEME**

**CONCLUSION**  
(Writer comments on a quote)

Texas may get some help from the White house. Fellow Texan George Bush will probably go to bat for the project. But his new Administration's early agenda will be dominated by the budget and trade deficits.

**A GODSEND?** Waxahachie has its own economic woes. Its role as a cotton center has declined in tandem with the fortunes of U.S. agriculture. And it had only a taste of the late, great Texas real estate boom. Housing starts in town fell to zero last year from 200 in 1985. Many land speculators were burned.

To them, the SSC is salvation. Real estate brokers already are trading boasts. One 220-acre parcel near the site of the main campus was for sale at \$5,000 an acre last week, says broker Edwin Farrar. When five buyers came forward, the seller pushed the price to \$20,000. "The good old days are back," crows Farrar.

Once the land is sold, Waxahachie residents will probably resist further change. Former city councilman Connor Yates welcomes the estimated 3,000 scientists and technicians the SSC would bring to town. But "I just hope they don't bring the ACLU with them," he frets. Yates also dreads the election that may turn Waxahachie "wet." For the moment, thirsty residents have to drive 10 miles to buy beer or wine. Once the scientists arrive, he believes, "I think we'll be able to convince them that they don't need alcohol for anything."

Creationism is another touchy subject. In an ancient riverbed 60 miles south-west of Waxahachie, Bible literalists claimed to have found contemporaneous human footprints among the tracks that gave Dinosaur Valley State Park its name. Although the find was debunked, creationists built their own tourist attraction at the park's gates to put across their point of view. And that point of view leaves no room for secular projects like the SSC. At Waxahachie's South-western Assemblies of God University, student Charles Whitener predicts: "It will never get completed. The lord Jesus will judge America for her wickedness. The depression is coming."

You read it here first.

*By Kevin Kelly in Waxahachie*

**NOTE:**

- Story flows from theme and doesn't stray from it—except for / background graf
- It leans forward, into future
- It has plenty of tension: The culture clash and the uncertainty whether the project will be built
- Every graf flows from its topic sentence

## Appendix E – Link to the Exchange Between Greenwald And Keller About Impartiality in Journalism

Click on Image to Go to Article

[HOME PAGE](#) [TODAY'S PAPER](#) [VIDEO](#) [MOST POPULAR](#) [U.S. Edition ▼](#)

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OP-ED COLUMNIST

## Is Glenn Greenwald the Future of News?

By [BILL KELLER](#)  
Published: October 27, 2013 | [588 Comments](#)

*Much of the speculation about the future of news focuses on the business model: How will we generate the revenues to pay the people who gather and disseminate the news? But the disruptive power of the Internet raises other profound questions about what journalism is becoming, about its essential character and values. This week's column is a conversation — a (mostly) civil argument — between two very different views of how journalism fulfills its mission.*

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## Appendix F – Link to the video with the Reslan interview

Click on Image to go to Article

### Is This The Most Embarrassing Interview Fox News Has Ever Done?

Reza Aslan, a religious scholar with a Ph.D. in the sociology of religions from the University of California and author of the new book *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, went on FoxNews.com's online show *Spirited Debate* to promote his book only to be prodded about why a Muslim would write a historical book about Jesus.

posted on July 27, 2013, at 8:30 p.m.



**Andrew Kaczynski**  
BuzzFeed Staff

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